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GARN, Jake

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## THE SALT II VERIFICATION MYTH

JAKE GARN



THE AUTHOR: Senator Garn (R.-Utah) was elected to Congress in 1974, and he serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, the Select Committee on Intelligence and the Committee on Appropriations. He was appointed Congressional Advisor to the SALT II negotiations in Geneva. Senator Garn served in the U.S. Navy as a pilot.

## IN BRIEF

*A campaign is afoot to inflate the real nature and extent of U.S. capabilities to verify Soviet compliance with the provisions of the SALT II Treaty—capabilities that have been jolted by the loss of U.S. collection sites in Iran. The quantitative restrictions in SALT are difficult enough to monitor; verification of Soviet adherence to the highly qualitative provisions of SALT II is clearly beyond the current and prospective unilateral technical means of the United States. The problem has been compounded by a demonstrated U.S. tendency to ignore or minimize a past trail of Soviet violations of SALT—a trail that, if it is continued under SALT II, could expand existing Soviet strategic advantages vis-a-vis the United States into staggering proportions. Among the myriad issues still to be resolved with respect to the SALT II Treaty are the principle and machinery of reciprocal territorial monitoring and on-site inspection as the indispensable tools of verification.*

**T**he U.S. Administration has entered into the most significant arms control agreement in the nuclear era. The agreement permits at least a threefold increase in Soviet nuclear capabilities (number of warheads). To that extent, one cannot speak realistically of an "arms control" agreement.

But, for the sake of meaningful debate, let us compromise on semantics and characterize the pending SALT II Treaty as a bad arms control agreement. The only thing more adverse than a bad agreement is one in which compliance cannot adequately be verified. Unfortunately, SALT II qualifies on both negative counts.

*The U.S. Monitoring Capability:  
Marginal at Best*

The ability by the United States to verify Soviet compliance with the provisions of SALT II is almost completely limited to what are dubbed as "national technical means." There is a campaign afoot to create an inflated impression of these unilateral intelligence capabilities available to the United States. Gaps in the capabilities tend to be ignored. Such debilitations as the loss of U.S. facilities in Iran, the betrayal of detailed information regarding U.S. reconnaissance satellites to Soviet agents, and the encryption by the Soviet Union of telemetry